(id) The recruitment of compulsory preshipment inspection in respect of agricultural and food products, fruit products, fish and fishery products, chemicals and allied products, engineering t>roducts, jute products, coir products including coir yarn (baled) and (non baled) hand knitted woollen carpets, footware components and human hair double drawn has been dispensed with provided the exporter produces a firm letter from overseas buyer that he does not want preshipment inspection from any Indian Inspection Agency and files it with the Customs authority at the time of shipment.

(iii) 17 out of 25 preshipment export documents required by the exoorters have been simplified, aligned and standardised on the basis of United Nations layout key which has been adopted by most of the developed countries including developing countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, Srilanka and Indonesia. The new system effected from 1st October, 1991 enables the exporter to prepare 17 out of 25 documents with the help of two Master Documents and use of a photo copier and appropriate masks with economy, accuracy, speed and convenience thereby reducing export documentation burden on our exporters appreciably.

(b) Most " the developed countries in cluding U.S.A., U.K. and Japan have ad opted United Nations layout key for docu ments connected with trade and transport. The new system is expected to put India at par with their practices.

(c) It is difficult to precisely estimate when the country could achieve a trade surplus for it depends on a number of global and domestic factors like international trading environment, prices in-ternational ternational market, domestic requirement of essential items etc.

(d) The interest charges for the year 1990-91 is Rs. 4069 Crores.

Export of Rice

1038. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had permitted export of rice during the year 1990-91;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government have received any representation from the All-India Rice Exporters Association to release the quota of non-basmati rice for exports; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 2,41,830 MTs of basmati rice valued at Rs. 288.06 crores and 3,13,720 MTs of non-Basmati rice valued at rupees! 187.83 crores were exported during 1990-91.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A quota of 2 lakh MTs of non-Basmati rice was released and placed at the disposal of Agricultural and Processed Food Proucts Expi^t Development Authority in addition to the earlier quota of 5 lakh MTs released for 1991-92

Investment by French firms in India

1039. UMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA; Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that while inaugurating the Ninth meeting of the Indo-French Joint Business Council he had given an invitation to the French Industrialists to invest in the sector of Computer Software. Food Processing, Telecommunications, Pollution control, superconductivity and Chemicals, etc. in India; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the French Industrialists to this invitation?